

BELL - Bell's Palsy

BELL-AP ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the anatomy and physiology as it relates to Bell's palsy.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that Bell's palsy is a form of facial paralysis resulting from damage or disease of the 7th (facial) cranial nerve.
2. Explain that the mechanism of Bell's palsy involves swelling of the nerve due to immune or viral disease, with ischemia and compression of the nerve in the confines of the temporal bone.

BELL-C COMPLICATIONS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the complications of Bell's Palsy.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that damage to the cornea can occur if the eyelid does not close: blinking is impaired or lacrimation does not occur.
2. Discuss that the frequent use of artificial tears or saline drops in the eyes may be helpful.
3. Explain that a lubricant eye ointment is most effective.
4. Explain that the healthcare provider may recommend the use of tape or an eye patch to help close the eye.

BELL-DP DISEASE PROCESS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the possible causes and disease process of Bell's Palsy.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that Bell's palsy can strike almost anyone at any age, but it is less common before age 15 and after age 60. Explain that it is more common in persons with diabetes, influenza, a cold or upper respiratory ailment, and pregnancy.
3. Explain that the common cold sore virus, herpes simplex, and other herpes viruses cause many cases of Bell's palsy, but Bell's palsy can also be caused by other infections especially tick fevers.

4. Explain that pain behind the ear may precede facial weakness and that weakness may progress to complete unilateral facial paralysis within hours. This paralysis may cause a drooping eyelid, inability to blink, drooping mouth, drooling, dryness of the eye or mouth, impaired taste, and excessive tearing. Explain that in severe cases the eye may not close and that salivation, taste and lacrimation may be affected.
5. Discuss that the prognosis for Bell's palsy is generally very good. Explain that about 80% recover completely within 3 months, but that for some the symptoms may last longer and may never completely disappear. Explain that the recovery for complete paralysis takes longer and that there is an increased incidence of residual symptoms.
6. Discuss that during the recovery period regrowth of nerve fibers may result in tearing while eating and unexpected muscle contractions during voluntary facial movements.

BELL-FU FOLLOW-UP

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the importance of regular follow-up and will develop a plan to manage the Bell's palsy and keep follow-up appointments.

STANDARDS:

1. Emphasize that full participation in the treatment plan is the responsibility of the patient.
2. Review the treatment plan with the patient/family, emphasizing the need for keeping appointments, taking medications as prescribed, and fully participating with the physical therapy plan.
3. Review the symptoms that should be reported and measures to take if they occur.
4. Stress the importance of keeping follow-up appointments and continuing the prescribed therapy as long as recommended by the healthcare provider.

BELL-L LITERATURE

OUTCOME: The patient/family will receive literature regarding Bell's palsy and its treatment.

STANDARDS:

1. Provide the patient/family with literature on Bell's palsy and its treatment.
2. Discuss the content of the literature.

BELL-M MEDICATIONS

OUTCOME: The patient will understand their medications and the importance of taking them as prescribed.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that medications may reduce inflammation of the nerve and may relieve pain.
2. Discuss the proper use, benefits, common side effects and interactions of the prescribed medication(s). Review signs of possible toxicity and appropriate follow up as indicated.
3. Emphasize the importance of taking medications as prescribed.
4. Discuss the mechanism of action of the medication as needed.
5. Emphasize the importance of consulting with a healthcare provider prior to initiating any new medications, including over-the-counter or herbal medications.
6. Emphasize the importance of providing a list of all current medications, including non-prescription or traditional remedies to the provider.

BELL-PM PAIN MANAGEMENT

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the plan for pain management.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that usually pain from Bell's palsy is transient and controllable with mild analgesics.
2. Explain that short term use of narcotics may be helpful in pain management as appropriate.
3. Explain the use of heat and cold in the relief of pain as appropriate.
4. Explain that the use of non-pharmacologic measures, such as imagery may be helpful with pain control.

BELL-TE TESTS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the tests that may be performed, including indications and impact on further care.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that chest and skull x-rays, CT and/or MRI scans may be necessary to rule out other serious causes of facial paralysis.
2. Explain that tests for tick fever may also help diagnose the cause of the palsy and may be necessary to guide appropriate treatment.
3. Explain that nerve conduction studies and electromyography may be ordered to determine the extent of the nerve damage.
4. Explain the specific test ordered.

5. Explain the necessity, benefits, and risks of the test to be performed, and how it relates to the course of treatment.
6. Explain any necessary preparation for the test ordered.
7. Explain the meaning of the test results, as appropriate.

BELL-TX TREATMENT

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the possible treatments that may be performed.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that the patient and medical team will make the treatment plan after reviewing available options.
2. Discuss the treatment plan, including lifestyle adaptations, pharmacologic, and psychosocial aspects.
3. Discuss the importance of fully participating with the treatment plan, including scheduled follow-up.